

# 2009

## Important Bird Areas Master Plan for Canada



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# Master Plan for Important Bird Area in Canada

## Important Bird Areas – The Global Context<sup>1</sup>

One in eight bird species is threatened with extinction, and even common species are in decline. Natural habitats across the globe are at risk from unsustainable land use practices. The earth's ecosystems are in upheaval—systems that maintain climate patterns, pollinate crops, safeguard watersheds, stabilize soils, and support human life.

Birds are the best documented of all animal and plant groups. In general, places rich in bird species are rich in other forms of biodiversity, and birds can indicate trends affecting biodiversity as a whole. Equally important, birds are among nature's most likeable creatures. Few Canadians will make lifestyle changes for the sake of "global biodiversity conservation," yet entire communities can be mobilized to save habitat for a local songbird. In conserving the birds we love, we conserve entire ecosystems.

Important Bird Areas are key sites for the conservation of birds and biodiversity, and the building blocks for conservation planning. They are identified nationally, using data gathered locally that are evaluated against standardised, international criteria. The worldwide network of IBAs forms an essential foundation for global nature conservation. These sites contain threatened species, endemic species, species representative of a biome, or highly exceptional concentrations of birds. They are often irreplaceable 'hotspots.'

Biodiversity is not distributed evenly across the globe. Therefore to achieve its mission of conserving birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, the BirdLife Partnership has created a method of identifying the most important places on earth for birds - Important Bird Areas - so that conservation effort and resources can be applied in the most cost effective and efficient way.

Important Birds Areas are:

- Places of international significance for the conservation of birds and other biodiversity.
- Recognised world-wide as practical tools for conservation
- Distinct areas amenable to practical conservation action
- Identified using standardised, agreed criteria
- Sites that together form part of a wider, integrated approach to the conservation and sustainable use of the natural environment

BirdLife's approach to conservation integrates species, site and habitat conservation into a unified strategy which, when combined with sustaining human needs, serves as a comprehensive conservation

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<sup>1</sup> BirdLife International IBA Program <http://www.birdlife.org/ibas/index.html>

blueprint for all BirdLife Partners. The BirdLife Important Bird Area Program is designed to identify, protect and manage a network of sites of international importance for birds and to compliment programs that focus on species and habitats. The IBA concept is central to all aspects of the BirdLife approach to achieving sustained biodiversity conservation. However, site-based conservation must be complimented with efforts focused on species and habitats, including the large landscapes that humans occupy and use such as our forests, agricultural landscapes, and settlements.

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) form a worldwide network of sites for the conservation of birds. When complete, this global network is likely to comprise around 15,000 IBAs covering some 10 million km<sup>2</sup> (c.7% of the world's land surface) identified on the basis of about 40% of the world's bird species. The effective conservation of these sites will contribute substantially to the protection of the world's biological diversity. As of March 2008 over 10,000 IBAs have been identified, mapped and documented in 178 countries and at sea by BirdLife partners throughout the globe

IBA programs are divided into four overlapping stages:

1. Start up: consultation, background content assessment, stakeholder analysis and establishment of national partnership and agreements; setting up a suitable institutional framework involving the cooperation of others such as government agencies, development NGO, universities, etc. Agreeing national objectives.
2. Identification: the process of identifying potential IBA sites, data collection, field surveys; production of an IBA inventory and population of a database.
3. Action planning: setting priorities and implementing advocacy, action and monitoring for IBAs.
4. National site conservation program: establishing a sustainable management cycle in which a program of advocacy, action and monitoring for the national IBA network is established with security of funding.

## Important Bird Areas in Canada

In Canada, Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada are partners in the IBA program, together bringing complementary strengths to ensure the most effective and efficient delivery of the program.

Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada launched the Canadian IBA Program in 1996. Since then, 597 sites that provide critical habitat for birds across all of Canada's diverse landscapes have been identified (Figure 1). Canada's BirdLife partners are committed to protecting the national IBA network.

Nature Canada works in partnership with affiliated provincial naturalist organizations (the Canadian Nature Forum), and local community groups to implement on-the-ground conservation efforts at IBAs across the country. Nature Canada has invested in more than 150 community stewardship projects at local IBAs on diverse conservation actions such as habitat restoration, removal of invasive species, re-vegetation, monitoring and safeguarding endangered species, and environmental education. Nature Canada engages in federal and international policy work in support of bird conservation and species at risk.

Bird Studies Canada (BSC) works in partnership with provincial and federal governments, other NGOs, academics and a network of approximately 20,000 citizen scientists to conduct research and monitoring programs that cover most bird groups in Canada. These programs also monitor a diverse range of habitat types from high elevation forests of New Brunswick to British Columbia's coastal beaches and are used to report on populations of birds at IBAs. Within the context of the IBA program, BSC leads the scientific and technical coordination, including the design and implementation of monitoring systems, data reporting, and analysis. BSC maintains the IBA database and the IBA Canada website, and directs the process to determine which sites merit being included as a Canadian IBA.

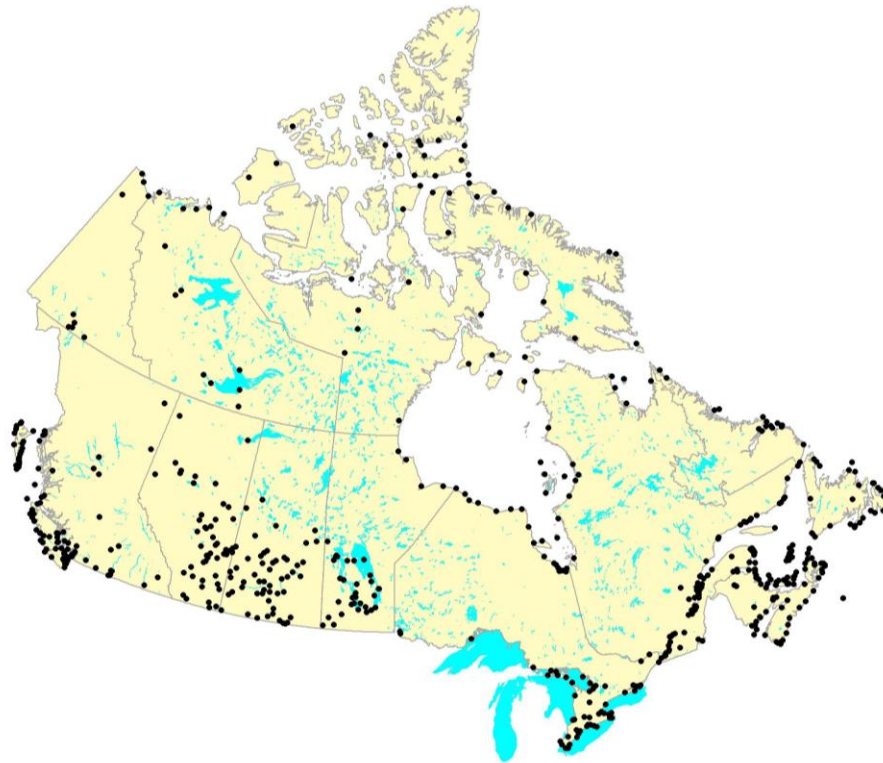


Figure 1. Important Bird Areas in Canada

In Canada most birds are migratory with over 90% [of species?] leaving for wintering grounds in the south. If we are to conserve birds in Canada we need to think beyond our borders. As such Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada are BirdLife supporting partners in the Americas. Through the network of BirdLife partners in Latin America and the Caribbean we aim to strengthen cooperation between organizations through a partner-to-partner transfer and sharing of resources (human and financial) and science capacity, in support of hemispheric bird conservation.

The conservation and maintenance of healthy, viable populations of all bird species native to Canada across the range of habitats in which they occur is the long term goal of our bird conservation programs.

While we have several program areas – operating at different scales and with different mechanisms – to help us achieve these goals, the Important Bird Area program is the cornerstone of our site-based approach to bird conservation.

As the BirdLife international partners in Canada, both Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada subscribe to the following general conservation agenda:

1. To prevent extinctions
2. To keep common birds common- reduce decline in common species
3. To identify, monitor, protect and restore a network of important bird areas
4. To identify, monitor and conserve habitats of international importance for birds and the environment
5. To engage and expand a global constituency of people who care for birds and their natural environment

## **Strategy for IBA conservation in Canada**

The purpose of this document is to map out a high level management framework for the Canadian IBA program for the next five years. The document outlines the major components of a national framework and identifies the roles and responsibilities of the national partners, Bird Studies Canada and Nature Canada. Because the actions of provincial partners are vital to the success of the network as a whole, they are also referenced in the text as they pertain to the national vision. Accompanying work plan documents will elucidate specific activities, delivery agents, budget requirements and timelines, and will link back to this framework.

### **A. Governance and Administration**

The conservation of IBAs in Canada involves the actions and cooperation of many players at many scales – from local, to regional, national, and international. Birdlife International establishes the framework for the global network and has developed various guidelines and standards. Nature Canada and BSC have roles to play at the national level. Provincial partners support the national network by taking on particular responsibilities in their own provinces. And then, of course, there are the individual volunteers who participate in bird monitoring programs and/or act as official Caretakers of their sites.

Given the distributed nature of the management of the network it is important that a clear governance structure be established so that roles and responsibilities are understood and that established guidelines and standards are met.

<b>Governance and Administration</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Lead/Responsible</b>	<b>Year</b>
Develop agreements among national partners outlining roles and responsibilities	Establish a national level MOU between Nature Canada and BSC (including sections on governance, responsibilities, finances, program evaluation, etc.)	Nature Canada / BSC	1
Develop MOUs between the national partners and each provincial partner	Develop and implement appropriate guidelines for IBA branding, communication, fundraising, expected activities, etc.	Nature Canada	1
Establish a National IBA Technical Committee	Establish terms of reference and membership.	BSC	1

## **B. Scientific and Technical Leadership**

The success and relevance of the IBA program rests largely on the scientific integrity and utility of the systems and data associated with it. If decision makers are to buy into the IBA concept, and use the IBA data to inform planning and policy, they must trust the data. This means that rigorous scientific and technical standards must be established and followed throughout the lifecycle of the IBA program, e.g., site identification and review, design of monitoring systems, analysis of results, and prioritization of conservation efforts, to name a few.

In the initial round of IBA identification, from 1997 to 2001, a Technical Steering Committee was struck to guide the evaluation process of IBAs across the country. With a re-invigorated national IBA program upon us, there is an urgent need to re-establish this committee, and define its terms of reference and membership as noted in Section A: Governance and Administration. This committee, now defined as a National IBA Technical Committee, will have a broadened mandate as compared to its predecessor: in addition to evaluating site nominations, it will provide scientific and technical guidance for the full lifecycle needs of the program as noted above and described in more detail below.

### ***Identification***

As noted above, Canada initiated a comprehensive IBA identification process in 1996, in conjunction with similar initiatives in the United States and Mexico. By April of 2001, 1,246 potential sites had been considered for IBA status in Canada, with 597 approved as IBAs. Sites were identified by Bird Studies Canada with the aid of a Technical Steering Committee, using a set of criteria that are consistent with other IBA programs throughout the world, while at the same time being applicable to the Canadian context. As with other IBA programs around the world, the evaluation criteria were organized into four categories, each of which provide a measure of the vulnerability of the target species: 1) Threatened Species, 2) Restricted Range Species, 3) Biome-restricted/representative Species and 4) Congregatory Species. Each IBA was also assigned a geographically-based level of significance: global, continental or national. If an IBA site falls under one or more of the four categories, the highest level of significance determines the overall significance. For instance, a site identified at the global level for a congregatory species and at the national level for a threatened species would be identified as globally significant.

The initial IBA identification process laid the foundation for the site-based conservation and stewardship activities that were coordinated by Nature Canada and local groups in subsequent years (described elsewhere in this document).

Since completion of the initial round of IBA identification in Canada, we have received a handful of new site nominations that require consideration for IBA status. Although sites were initially evaluated against data that were as complete and up-to-date as possible at the time, bird populations have changed in the past ten years and so has our information about them. Therefore, existing sites need to be evaluated periodically and monitored to reconfirm their status and to update site information for the IBA Canada database and the BirdLife World Bird Database. It is further expected that the current review of IBA information within each province will yield additional sites for consideration. For example, sites that were suspected to be IBAs during the initial round of evaluation, but which were data deficient or which narrowly missed a threshold, might now have new information that would warrant a fresh evaluation.

BSC staff members have also participated in scoping meetings regarding a Marine IBA network off the west coast of North America. Although BSC did identify some Marine IBAs during the first round of identification, this was not done in a systematic manner. The current initiative offers the opportunity to produce a more comprehensive and rigorous assessment of Marine IBAs. This will be explored as funding and opportunity allow.

<b>Identification</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Lead/Responsible</b>	<b>Year</b>
Ensure that IBAs continue to be identified on an ongoing basis	Establish and implement a process to evaluate new IBA nominations	BSC/ITC*	1
	Evaluate site nominations on a regular cycle as they are received	BSC	1+



Engage in BirdLife International's efforts to identify Marine IBAs	Establish a process to comprehensively identify and evaluate potential Marine and freshwater IBAs	BSC	With opportunity
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\*= IBA Technical Committee

**Site Assessment and Monitoring**

BirdLife International has developed a global framework for IBA monitoring. More than 'just' bird population monitoring, the framework (Figure 2) contains elements and indicators of pressure (=threats), state (=condition of birds and/or habitats at IBAs), and response (=conservation action at IBAs). Although BirdLife refers to this framework as simply 'IBA Monitoring,' the partners in Canada and the United States have adopted the broader terminology of 'IBA Site Assessment and Monitoring' to better reflect the situation in North America.

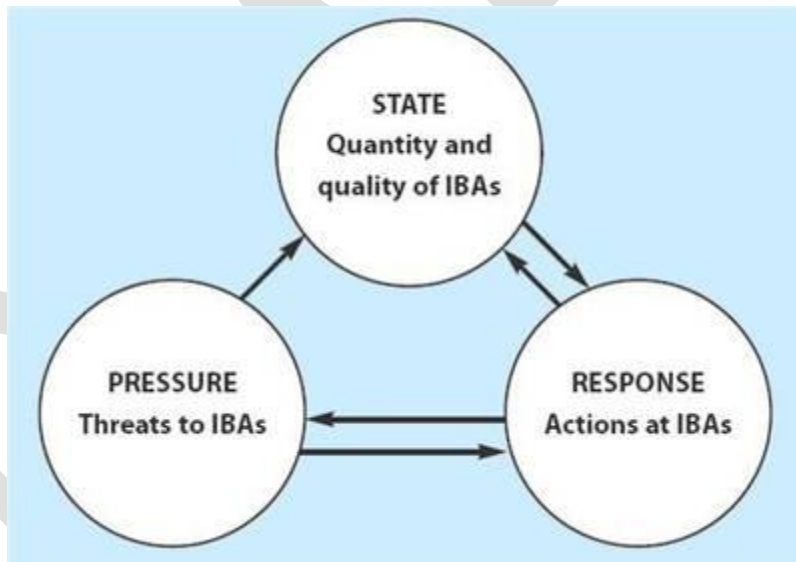


Figure 2. The relationship between indicators of pressure, state and response. Source: BirdLife International

IBA site assessment and monitoring is one element of a wider framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the IBA network, for tracking progress towards our strategic objectives and, more widely, for reporting on the status of IBAs at regional and global levels. At the national level, IBA monitoring is essential to track and respond to threats, understand the status and trends of biodiversity, and assess the effectiveness of conservation efforts. A standardised system will allow national data to be compiled regionally and globally (e.g., BirdLife anticipates reporting on IBAs every four years at the

global level) and should provide a powerful tool for international conservation advocacy and fundraising.

While the results of monitoring are very important for IBA conservation, nationally and globally, the monitoring process often has many helpful side-benefits as well. These include, for example, creating awareness, developing technical capacity, engaging local communities and site management authorities, and building a national constituency for IBA conservation. Almost always, IBA monitoring will require working in close partnership with individuals like IBA caretakers and/or other organisations, including site management authorities. Extra resources will be required on an ongoing basis for co-ordination, training and reporting.

It is well accepted that not all IBAs can be monitored on a regular basis (if at all). However, it is anticipated that the majority of accessible sites will be visited and assessed regularly by IBA Caretakers, once a network has been established. This regular monitoring must be done in very simple and cost effective ways — this is essential for sustainability. The minimal requirement is regular collection of information on at least one appropriate indicator for each of pressure, state, and response. More in-depth monitoring may be appropriate, where resources allow, at a subset of priority sites. The sites and variables to monitor need careful selection. Such monitoring must be linked clearly to site conservation objectives.

In Canada, IBA site assessment and monitoring will be carried out by a variety of different agents as needs dictate (e.g., Caretakers, site authorities, provincial coordinators, national partners, etc.). A nested system of data validation and review will be instituted to ensure the integrity and consistency of data across the country. Monitoring data from all regions will feed into a national database, which in turn will roll up to global databases maintained by the BirdLife Global Secretariat.

Although the details of the Canadian approach to IBA Site Assessment and Monitoring have yet to be developed, it is fair to say that we will learn a great deal from the experiences of National Audubon (the BirdLife partner in the United States), who is just now piloting a formalized IBA monitoring effort in several states. BSC maintains a seat on the US IBA Site Assessment Committee and will liaise closely with National Audubon on this issue. Due to the strong similarities of Canada and the United States, it is expected that the approaches of the two countries will be highly similar, i.e., using similar bird monitoring protocols and databases, web-based tools, etc.

<b>Site Assessment and Monitoring</b>			
Objective	Activities	Lead/Responsible	Year
Develop a monitoring strategy for IBAs in Canada	Evaluate and determine protocols for IBA monitoring, e.g., frequency/timing of visits, content of data fields, etc.	BSC / ITC	2
	Prioritize IBAs to be monitored and	BSC / NC / Provincial	2-3

	identify the appropriate agent	Partners	
	Encourage use of eBird and other bird monitoring programs at IBAs to augment monitoring	BSC	2+
Implement a monitoring strategy	Institute and coordinate regional review teams to ensure verification of data	BSC / ITC / Provincial Partners	2+
	Train regional leads as appropriate in use of BLI monitoring techniques.	Nature Canada / BSC	2-3
	Provide tools, training and support to Caretakers in order to implement the monitoring framework	Nature Canada / BSC and Provincial Partners	3-5

\*= IBA Technical Committee

### ***Data Management and Reporting***

Related to the higher level objectives of identification, monitoring, and site assessment is the underlying database infrastructure, which must be maintained and enhanced to support the IBA program in general. Because the database supports the IBA program as a whole, and indeed supports a variety of objectives external to the program itself, database management has been identified as a cross-cutting, stand alone objective with its own list of associated activities. Elements of database management are present (or implied) in many of the other objectives and activities – these have been collated below. Because we elected to produce a web-based IBA directory in Canada, in lieu of a printed book, the IBA database and website are of utmost importance. Information on Canada's 597 IBAs can be found at [www.ibacanada.com](http://www.ibacanada.com)

<b>Data Management and Reporting</b>			
Objective	Activities	Lead/Responsible	Year
Maintain an up-to-date IBA database and website	Review and update all IBA sites summaries	BSC / Provincial Review Teams / Caretakers	1-3
	Re-design IBA website and transfer to BSC server	BSC with Nature Canada	1
	Develop systems to incorporate recent bird monitoring data into the IBA database	BSC	1

	Establish process to allow the re-evaluation of existing sites against the most recent population thresholds	BSC	2
	Develop interactive web-based data entry tools	BSC	2-3
Report on the status of IBAs	Periodically transfer the Canadian IBA database to the BirdLife Global Secretariat for inclusion in the WBDB	BSC	As needed
	Develop web-based report cards for IBAs	BSC	2-3
	Produce an electronic 'state of the IBAs' report	BSC / Nature Canada	5+

### C. The IBA National Network – Building Awareness and Securing Profile

A critical aspect of supporting a long term IBA conservation program is the ability to engage and build ownership of the IBA program across a variety of audiences and key stakeholders.

The IBA concept is very marketing friendly and easy to understand. It derives from the obvious consideration that we cannot effectively protect birds if we do not conserve the places where they live. This offers an exceptional communication advantage and opportunity. Communicating the existence and importance of IBAs and the threats they are exposed to will greatly support our conservation efforts to protect them and should be considered as an integral part of the national IBA conservation strategy.

Sufficient awareness about the IBA concept is almost a necessary condition to be able to conserve them. Moreover, too often, decisions about use of natural resources are based only on a narrow assessment of its cash value, without a full consideration of other values, such as dispersed ecosystem services and existence values. This applies as much to land-use and development planning decisions made by local and national governments as to natural resource use and land-use decisions made by local communities. There is, therefore, a need for a wider realisation of the importance of IBAs to more effectively support their conservation.

In addition, raising awareness of IBAs and the threats that they face can greatly support the building of a constituency for their conservation among a broad spectrum of stakeholders. In essence, there is a need to raise awareness of:

- the overall IBA concept and program;
- the location of IBAs in the country;
- the conservation status and threats to IBAs;
- the response, the activities and plans (IBA conservation strategy) developed by the Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada;
- the benefits that IBA conservation can deliver to the society at large as well as to local communities;
- the contribution of IBA conservation to the international, national and local plans and obligations towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Communication activities should be organised at different levels, from national to provincial to local. A variety of tools and activities can be used at the site level. Where local groups are present, they will often be well positioned to initiate or support such activities.

More targeted awareness building efforts are required for specific stakeholders. Importantly these include the landowners or stewards of sites including individuals, corporations or public agencies. Other critical audiences include governments which are in a position to develop public policy, which will affect land use and the conservation status of IBA sites.

Advocacy is an essential tool for IBA conservation. Well-targeted advocacy can have a positive (and often very cost-effective) impact. The overall aim of IBA advocacy is to help ensure the conservation and wise use of these sites in perpetuity. Specific aims include:

### ***Securing Profile for the IBA Network***

Although the IBA network is known within the conservation community, it has not penetrated the land-use planning community in a coherent or comprehensive manner. This applies to all level of governments in Canada. Some progress has been achieved. For example, national wind farm siting guidelines specify that developers should avoid IBAs and some provinces have adopted these as a basis for their planning decisions (but more needs to be done to have these guidelines applied). In order to achieve conservation of the network, IBAs must be promoted to a top-of-mind status when governments are developing land-use and conservation policies and programs.

### ***Achieving Protection of IBAs***

Much of the action required to assure conservation will necessarily occur at the site level and will be specifically designed to meet the unique set of circumstances which a site faces. However, many sites are themselves (or potentially could be) elements of other existing networks of protected areas. For example, in Canada the majority of federal Migratory Bird Sanctuaries and National Wildlife Areas are

IBAs. A number are Canadian Coast Guard properties. Still others are members of provincial protected area networks. Policy and advocacy work is often warranted in order to effect changes which will affect a class of IBAs and enhance their protection. For example, a number of abandoned Coast Guard properties are ideal candidates as new NWAs, and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries lack legal mechanisms to protect habitat. A comprehensive and ongoing analysis is required in order to identify where these policy adjustments would be most effective.

An important aspect of IBA protection is to increase the coverage of IBAs by the existing protected area tools at the national, provincial or local level, and to strengthen and improve the management of IBAs that are already protected. However, it is often both desirable and necessary to use alternative approaches for site-based protection, complementing formal protected areas – such as community-managed conservation areas, private reserves and conservation easements.

***Landscape Level Conservation***

To have any hope of tackling the fundamental threats to IBAs, conservation efforts must also be directed to the broader economic and land-use planning context in which they occur including sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining, transport, energy and tourism. IBAs are by definition special areas for birds but they are not ecological islands and are impacted by what happens around them. Identifying and addressing external threats is an essential element of IBA conservation.

<b>Building Awareness</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Lead/Responsible</b>	<b>Year</b>
Establish and maintain a knowledge and understanding of the IBA Network among decision makers, stakeholders and the general public in Canada	Develop and implement national branding and communications plan	Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada	1-5
	Communicate about IBAs and their threats to governments, colleagues and the general public	BSC and Nature Canada	2-5
Develop strategies to have IBAs adopted as key components of land use planning processes at all levels of government.	Advocate adoption of IBAs as central component of NABCI planning	BSC and Nature Canada	2-3
	Advocate for the formal protection of IBAs as federal and provincial protected areas	Nature Canada & Provincial Partners	Ongoing
	Promote the use of IBAs as a tool in landuse planning (e.g.	Provincial Partners & Nature Canada	Ongoing

	wind farm siting)		
	Provide standardized tools to Provincial partners for Caretakers to use for local IBA advocacy	Nature Canada	2-3
	Advocate use of IBAs in targeting lands for conservation and stewardship activities	Provincial Partners & Nature Canada	Ongoing

#### D. Site Conservation Action

Individual IBAs have differing and often unique needs with respect to site conservation in the long term. Selecting the right approach and adapting it over time as circumstances evolve is also critical. The diagram below offers a schematic of some of the most common categories, approaches and tools available to protect and conserve IBAs.

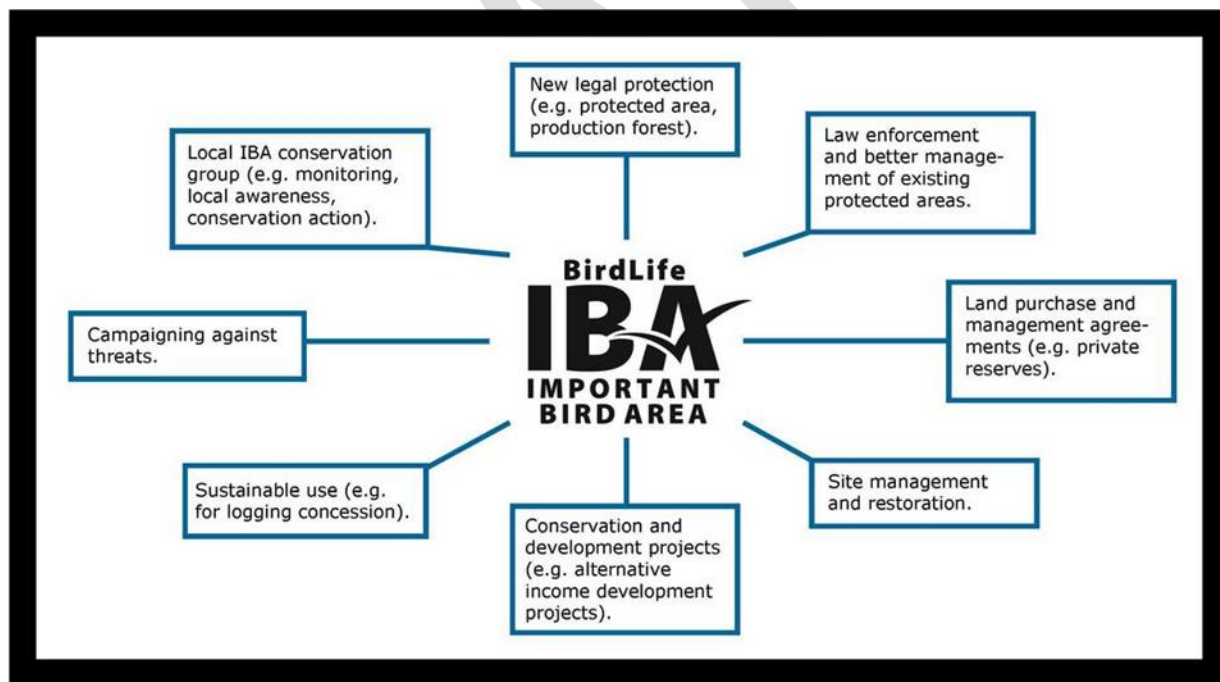


Figure 3: Examples of approaches and tools use to conserve IBAs. Source BirdLife International

The monitoring and assessment process for IBAs will identify those sites in greatest need of specific action. More specifically, if well designed, it will show:

- Where is conservation action needed most urgently?
- What are the needs for intervention – what broad classes of action will work best for particular sites?
- Who needs to be involved, and what should their roles and responsibilities be?

Conservation action for IBAs stretches across a number of direct interventions and the implementation of programs on site. This might range from management or restoration of the site through population management programs for threatened/declining species to mobilisation of the public/members to support IBA conservation. The spectrum of options effectively ranges from the exclusion of human use to collaborative management practices.

Although most IBAs are subjected to similar categories of threats, each site is unique in terms of the local manifestation of the factors affecting its conservation status. These local and specific factors, often evolving and changing over time, require the development of a site-specific approach to deal with the local situation.

In order to be effective, once IBAs are prioritised for action, careful examination of the most appropriate response to the factors threatening each site will be considered in the development of an effective plan of actions.

There are a wide range of conservation actions that can be used to protect IBAs, including:

#### *Site Management*

This involves direct interventions in order to maintain, alter or improve specific structural or ecological characteristics of the site to achieve specific conservation objectives for species or communities of species. It often applies to sites where some degree of management is the only chance for long term conservation. In particular:

- fragmented remnants of habitats with no chances of expansion elsewhere;
- sites where specific natural ecological roles have been eliminated and which need to be re-established or replaced (eg. ungulate grazing in grasslands);
- sites that require continuous management to stave-off a threat – such as grassland sites threatened by exotic species.
- species-specific actions such as re-stocking, artificial nests or nesting habitats, control of invasive species and predators, etc.

#### *Site Restoration/Rehabilitation*

This includes activities to restore or rehabilitate specific elements of the habitat of a site with either species-specific or more general conservation objectives. Some examples include sites degraded by specific human activities (fire, logging, pollution, etc.) as well as areas impacted by a natural disaster such as a severe storm. It might include also species-specific actions listed under management.

#### *Outreach to Foster Site Conservation*

This includes site-specific outreach activities to raise the profile of a site and its threats with the eventual outcome of securing better site protection. Activities that fall under this category include



conducting nature trips for children or youth at IBAs so they will learn about its conservation, or holding a birding festival to promote the IBA's protection.

In Canada, initial work towards conserving IBAs in Canada occurred in the late 1990s when Nature Canada hired regional coordinators to work with local communities to write over 100 conservation plans for IBAs across the country. The conservation plans arose from extensive consultations with interested local groups, and generally reflect these local priorities in their strategies and actions. Additionally, a variety of site conservation activities (outreach, site management and site restoration) have been supported by Nature Canada through its ten year old Communities in Action program.

<b>Site Conservation Action</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Lead/Responsible</b>	<b>Year</b>
Establish a Caretaker Network in each province and territory and provide coordination and support.	Through the Nature Network or other partners establish a sustainable Caretaker Network in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Nova Scotia over a 5 year time frame	Nature Canada	1-5
	Establish a process to recruit additional provincial/territorial Caretaker partners	Nature Canada	3-5
	Maintain and direct Communities in Action Fund in support of Caretakers' on the ground stewardship work	Nature Canada	Ongoing
	Work with partners to ensure additional provincial/local resources to support on the ground stewardship	Nature Canada and Provincial Partners	1-5
Identify sites which require specific conservation actions and facilitate development of site specific conservation strategies.	Promote protection of key IBAs as federally (or provincially) protected areas.	Nature Canada with Provincial Partners as appropriate	Ongoing
	Develop and implement a provincial-scale prioritization framework, tied to site assessment data, to identify IBAs which require additional attention and action	Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada	3-5
	Monitor activities on protected IBAs and advocate appropriate management actions	Nature Network and Nature Canada	Ongoing
	Support the development of	Nature Network and	3-5

	site management plans and conservation strategies where absent	Nature Canada	
	Review, update and promote existing IBA conservation plans as useful tools for site-specific actions	Nature Canada with Bird Studies Canada	4-5
Promote educational use of IBAs	Encourage educational activities within IBAs and develop supportive strategies and resources to this end	Nature Canada and partners	3-5

### E. International

Bird conservation is an international issue. Most bird species rely on healthy habitats in more than one country for their survival and fitness. There is an international responsibility that requires coordinated international measures to ensure healthy, viable populations. BirdLife recognizes that the issues affecting birds, their habitats and the global environment are inseparably linked with social, economic and cultural factors. These issues can only be addressed effectively if conservation actions are undertaken in the context of the human societies reflecting the needs, welfare and aspirations of people living there.

The Canadian IBA Network is part of a much larger Global Network. Nature Canada and BSC have signed on as Supporting Partners of the BirdLife Americas Program, a strong component of which is IBAs. It is in Canada's interest to participate in such international bird conservation efforts, since the vast majority of birds that nest in Canada overwinter in other countries to the south.

Although there are no formal criteria for a Supporting Partner in the Americas, it is understood that a Supporting Partner is willing and capable of providing technical and financial assistance to other partners in the region. The aim of a network of supporting partners is to channel financial resources and expertise available in some partners towards other partners who may benefit from such support in order to grow, undertake conservation work, strengthen their capacity and become more financially self-sufficient. It is a two-way process based on a joint desire for a stronger partnership throughout the Americas. This work improves hemispheric collaboration & coordination, and enhances the effectiveness of conservation efforts on the ground throughout the Americas and the Caribbean.

The first meeting of Supporting Partners in the Americas was held in Canada at Bird Studies Canada in 2003 and included the participation of Bird Studies Canada, National Audubon, Nature Canada, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Vogelbescherming. The second meeting of supporting partners was hosted by National Audubon in Washington DC in October of 2008. Over this period investment by supporting partner in the Americas has increased from less than \$150,000 in 2003 to \$800,000 in 2008.

There are a number of approaches that can be taken by supporting partners that include: Institutional Strengthening – core resources are provided to a Partner based on a mutually agreed plan; Project Development Support – this is the most common form of support where funding is restricted to a

specific project; Technical Exchanges – this involves one- or two-way exchanges between Supporting Partner staff and other partners. This may be on specific activities related to bird monitoring, environmental education or even fundraising. For example, Bird Studies Canada’s Latin American training/exchange program which provide advance training to Latin America field ornithologists; Organizational Capacity Development – directed at senior staff to strengthen the collective skill set of managers on important issues like business planning, communications, finance and administration; Mentoring – some Supporting Partners have provided one-to-one mentoring of individuals on specific issues; and Sabbaticals – a number of Supporting Partners provide sabbaticals for their staff with other Partners to learn about the work of the BirdLife partnership and to provide assistance to these Partners in areas where there is an interest and need.

The Supporting Partners may meet to discuss and coordinate their strategic investments in the region. The Americas Secretariat plays an important role in coordinating and convening meetings among supporting partners and tracking the various supporting partner initiatives. The resourcing of these meetings will increasingly be covered by the Supporting Partners themselves. The outputs of these meetings will be communicated to the partnership as a whole through the Executive Consejo Regional de las Americas (CRA) and annual CRA meetings.

<b>International</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Lead/Responsible</b>	<b>Year</b>
Support on the ground efforts at IBAs across the Americas that focus on conservation and sustainable livelihoods	Nature Canada CIDA projects	Nature Canada	Ongoing
Participate where appropriate in the BLI Flyways initiative to protect linked IBAs in the Hemisphere	Develop the concept of linking conservation of IBAs in Canada to linked sites in other countries.	Nature Canada / Bird Studies Canada	Ongoing
Advanced training for Latin America field ornithologists	Internship program to provide training in advanced field techniques pertaining to songbirds (mist-netting, bird banding, ageing and sexing, point counts, migration monitoring, etc.)	Bird Studies Canada	Ongoing
Engage as supporting partners in support of BirdLife family with a focus on the Americas Network	Participate in supporting partners meetings and activities as appropriate	Nature Canada / Bird Studies Canada	Ongoing
	Participate in BirdLife Climate Change Task Force	Nature Canada	Ongoing
	Enhance scientific and technical capacity of BirdLife	Bird Studies Canada	Ongoing

	partners through training in GIS, data management, analysis, etc.		
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Insert Gant Chart Showing Timelines

Insert Gant Chart Showing Projected Budget by Planned Activity & by Year

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